



FOUNDATION FOR FAIR CONTRACTING OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

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Education Committee Public Hearing 3/5/12 S.B. 304

The Foundation for Fair Contracting of Connecticut applauds the Education Committee for holding a hearing on Raised Bill 304, an act concerning the inclusion of labor history in the public school curriculum.

The Foundation for Fair Contracting is a not-for-profit labor-management organization. We represent a number of the building trade unions and their contractors. We monitor public construction projects to ensure that the contractors are in compliance with Connecticut's labor laws.

The Foundation for Fair Contracting (FFC) fights to make sure that Connecticut's construction workers have a standard of living. They should expect it. They've been through 3-4 year long apprenticeship programs and OSHA trainings. They keep our buildings and roads safe. I believe they should be paid a family-sustaining wage, have access to health insurance and a retirement plan. It seems like common sense to expect these things. But that hasn't always been a given.

We need to remind ourselves, let alone our younger generations, why we should now expect to receive a family-sustaining wage, health insurance, retirement; why we should expect paid holidays, paid vacation, maternity leave, paternity leave, even bathroom breaks. We should expect these things! We should think it absolutely ridiculous that an employer could ever deny us these things. But that does not mean we shouldn't appreciate them.

Labor's role in history textbooks and labor's important accomplishments, which changed American life forever are sadly misrepresented, downplayed and simply ignored. Undeniably, labor played a key role in the development of American democracy. Child labor laws, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, the 8-hour workday, weekends and sick leave... We are entitled to these. We are! We should be! But let us remind ourselves and be thankful for the sacrifices those before us made to achieve these inalienable rights.

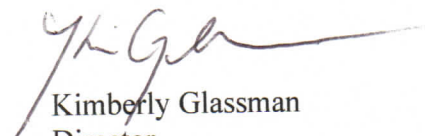
Labor has historically gone to battle, not only for their members, but for the greater good of their communities as well. Nowhere is this truer than in the area of civil rights, where labor unions were the indispensable actors in mobilizing the grassroots and political power to win battles, from our neighborhoods to our legislatures. As far back as 1945, with the Quinn-Ives Bill, the first law to abolish discrimination in hiring, the labor movement has been a stalwart supporter of civil rights. The baby boomer generation may be the last generation that remembers labor was a driving force behind the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. How many high school students know that the late great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis while

supporting striking, sanitation workers and his final speech, "I've Been to the Mountain Top", was given to encourage AFSCME members not to give up their fight for fair and equal treatment? I challenge the members of this committee to take a survey of five high school students and ask when the 40 hour work week began and who made it possible. It is a shame that we have not provided these educational basics for all students in Connecticut.

We urge you to pass Raised Bill 304 for the betterment of Connecticut's future leaders.

"We are not makers of history. We are made by history," Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sincerely,



Kimberly Glassman
Director